

April 8, 2009

**OBEY IN CHIPPEWA FALLS FOR BRIEFING ON BUSINESS ASSISTANCE
PROVIDED BY THE NW MANUFACTURING OUTREACH CENTER**

CHIPPEWA FALLS, WI - Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) was at Rooney Printing in Chippewa Falls today for a briefing on how the North West Manufacturing Outreach Center (NWMOC) based at UW-Stout is working to help Wisconsin companies. Over the past decade, Obey has secured about \$3 million in federal funds to help continue the program, allowing it to provide assistance to more than 1,000 small and medium-sized manufacturers in 33 counties, helping create or retain 2,800 jobs, with a total sales impact for these companies of more than \$339 million.

"The Manufacturing Outreach Center is one of those hidden jewels that has played a key role in helping companies stay modern and competitive," Obey said. "They help companies recognize the little changes they can make in how they operate, which can make a huge difference in their bottom line and ultimate success."

"Helping small businesses thrive and grow is a good thing anytime. In times like these, it's a necessity," Obey added. "I'm glad to be here today to see firsthand how what this means to companies in Wisconsin."

NWMOC applies "lean strategies" to help companies become more productive. For companies like Rooney Printing, a small business based in the Chippewa Falls Industrial Park with 15 employees, that means working through small but meaningful steps, such as more efficiently laying out the workfloor, getting rid of unnecessary clutter, better organization of equipment and tools, and adoption of a "mental philosophy" to produce efficiencies throughout the operation. Last year alone, NWMOC provided technical assistance 136 times to 120 manufacturing companies. Clients reported benefits of over \$54 million, which has helped create or retain 426 jobs in the region.

NWMOC is part of the national Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Program, which Obey supports. Nationally, last year the MEP program helped almost 32,000 manufacturing companies become more efficient and competitive by adopting new technologies and taking steps to streamline operations. This resulted creating or retaining 57,000 jobs, with \$10.5 billion in new sales and modernization investments exceeding \$2.19 billion. Recognizing that

success, President Obama has highlighted MEP as a priority, proposing in his budget submission to double the programs funding to \$250 million over the next 5 years.

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- For more information on NWMOC visit: <http://nwmoc.uwstout.edu>

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